

# Speaking Up for Every Child

## Enhancing Family Engagement Module 4



## **PaTTAN's Mission**

**The mission of the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) is to support the efforts and initiatives of the Bureau of Special Education, and to build the capacity of local educational agencies to serve students who receive special education services.**

## **PDE's Commitment to Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

**Our goal for each child is to ensure Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams begin with the general education setting with the use of Supplementary Aids and Services before considering a more restrictive environment.**

## Module 4 Goals

Participants will:

- Gain knowledge of how to advocate for students and families within your school
- Identify strategies to enable families and students to advocate for themselves

# Family Engagement



Family Engagement promotes equitable partnerships among schools, families and communities to actively advance student achievement through shared commitment, decision-making and responsibility.

**#PAFamilyEngagement**

# Regulations and Implications for Practice



**IDEA**



**ESSA**



**PA State Performance  
Plan (SPP)**

**Indicator 8**



**Danielson Framework**

**Component 4C -  
Communicating with Families**



**PA System for Principal  
Effectiveness**

**Component 4A – Maximizes  
Parent and Community  
Involvement and Outreach**

# ESSA Parent Guide

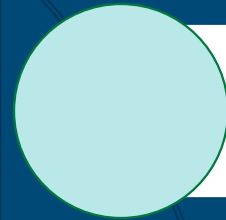
*Share with Your  
School Community!*



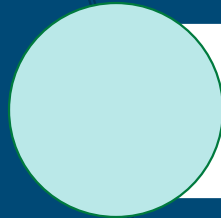
## Understanding the *Every Student Succeeds Act*

A Parents' Guide to the Nation's Landmark Education Law

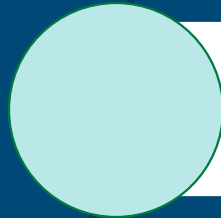
# Core Beliefs of Family Engagement



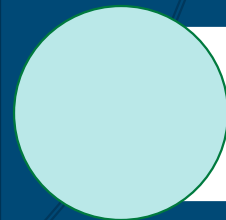
**All families have dreams for their children and want what is best for them.**



**All families have the capacity to support their children's learning.**



**Families and school staff are equal partners.**



**The responsibility for cultivating and sustaining partnerships among school, home and community rests primarily with school staff, especially school leaders.**





Schools and  
Families  
Speaking  
Up for  
Every Child

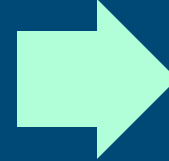
*“There can be  
no keener  
revelation of a  
society’s soul  
than the way  
in which it  
treats its  
children.”*

*Nelson Mandela*



# Teacher Support and Student Achievement

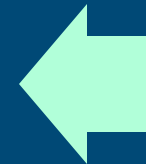
A school environment that is perceived by students as being **supportive, fair, and caring**



Creates greater levels of **student engagement and academic commitment**



Leading to increased levels of **high school completion, participation in post-secondary education, and economic self-sufficiency**



Which are associated with **better attendance and higher test scores**

# Valuing All Families

- **Recognize, learn about, and affirm** all cultures and backgrounds
- **Connect** what students are learning to their backgrounds
- **Utilize** community resources to increase connections between schools and families
- **Recognize and support** different modes of family involvement
- **Provide** information to support learning at home
- **Offer** interpreters and translate all documents into families' native languages



# Recognizing Influences on School-Family Partnerships

Race

Language

Sexual  
Orientation

Occupation

Ethnicity

Socio-  
economic  
Class

Ability and  
Disability

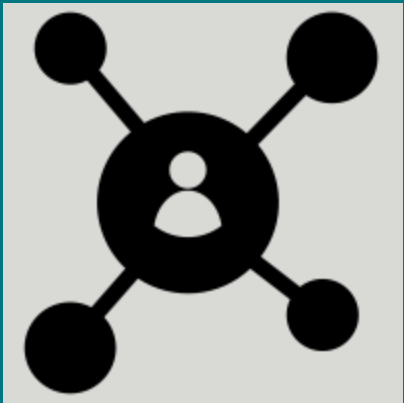
Culture

Nationality



## Activity 4.1

### Connections



## Thoughtfully consider:

- what you have in common with your colleagues
- the connections you have with the families within your school
- how can you build upon these connections to more effectively develop relationships with your stakeholders



The best teachers are  
those who show you  
where to look, but  
don't tell you  
what to see.

Alexandra K. Trenfor

[www.social-consciousness.com](http://www.social-consciousness.com)

# Promoting Advocacy

# What is Advocacy?



## Advocacy

- the act of pleading a cause
- support for a cause



## Advocate

- one who pleads for another
- one who argues a cause
- a supporter
- to support or defend
- to promote a cause or point of view
- to argue in favor of





# Promoting School Advocacy

## What Is School Advocacy?

- Providing rigorous academic preparation
- Creating an equitable learning environment for all students
- Developing policies and procedures that encourage family members' engagement in education

## Advocating for Students and Families

- Listen to the students and their families
- Collaborate as equal partners
- Make strength-based decisions
- Identify and resolve issues
- Facilitate transitions

# Reflection and Action to Promote Equitable Practices

**Personal**

**Interpersonal**

**Communal**

**Systemic**

**Ecological**

# Creating Equitable School Systems



**Establish a team**



**Support social and  
emotional wellness**



**Communicate with  
stakeholders**



**Explore and select  
instructional  
delivery scenarios**



**Focus on effective  
instruction**



**Provide high-quality  
instructional  
professional learning**



# Promoting Family Advocacy

## What Is Family Advocacy in Education?

- Speaking up for their children
- Asking for help when needed
- Collaborating with educational partners
- Participating in decision-making
- Understanding their rights in education
- Helping their children set goals



## Promoting Families Who Advocate

- Attitudes endorsing families' strengths and resources
- Expansive views of what engagement looks like
- Alternative means of input and interaction
- Identification of barriers to family advocacy
- Determination of solutions by families



# Perceived Factors Impacting Family Advocacy

## Families

- Educational background
- Socioeconomic status
- Cultural differences
- Time constraints
- Feelings of helplessness

## Schools

- Funding
- Training
- Time constraints
- Communication
- Stereotyping

# How Schools Increase Family Advocacy



**Have high expectations that apply  
to all**



**Support families' influence on student  
achievement**



**Work with families to network and  
build social capital**



**Institute programs and practices that  
focus on improving student  
achievement**



**Develop stronger definitions of  
advocacy in your school**

## Activity 4.2

### Think About It



**Consider the families within your school and identify their strengths as:**

- caregivers
- communicators
- volunteers
- learning coaches
- decision-making
- community members



# Promoting Student Self- Advocacy

# **Self- Advocacy:**

## *A Definition*

“...learning how to speak up  
for yourself, making your  
own decisions about your  
own life.”

## Self- Advocacy:

When should  
schools  
promote it?

NOW and every day after!



# Self-Advocacy:

## *Steps*



Set achievable short-term goals



Participate in practice and review activities



Outline the steps to achieve new skills and experiences



Choose and create their own team

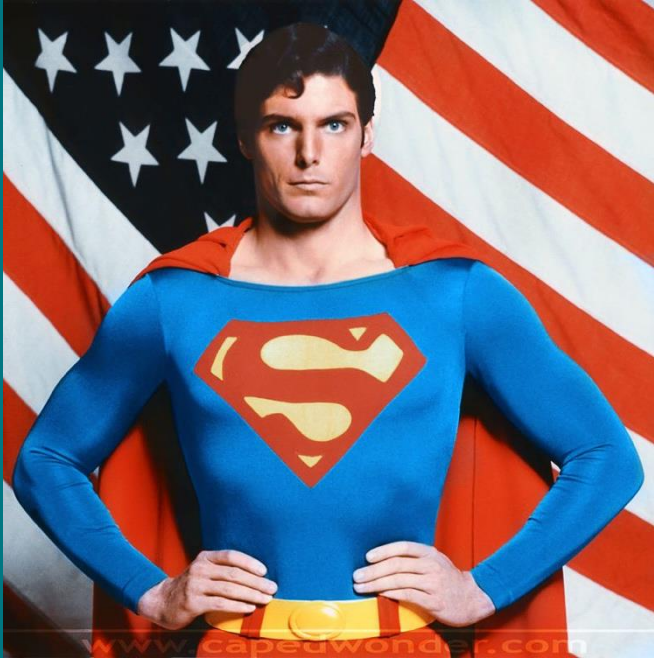


# Teach Students to Identify and Convey



- Their definition of themselves
- Their strengths and needs, likes and dislikes, interests and goals
- Their abilities, and how their differences affect them and others
- Things that make it easier or harder for them in a situation
- Supports and resources at school, home, and in the community





“So many of our dreams at first seem impossible, then they seem improbable, and then, when we summon the will, they soon become inevitable.”

Christopher Reeve

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